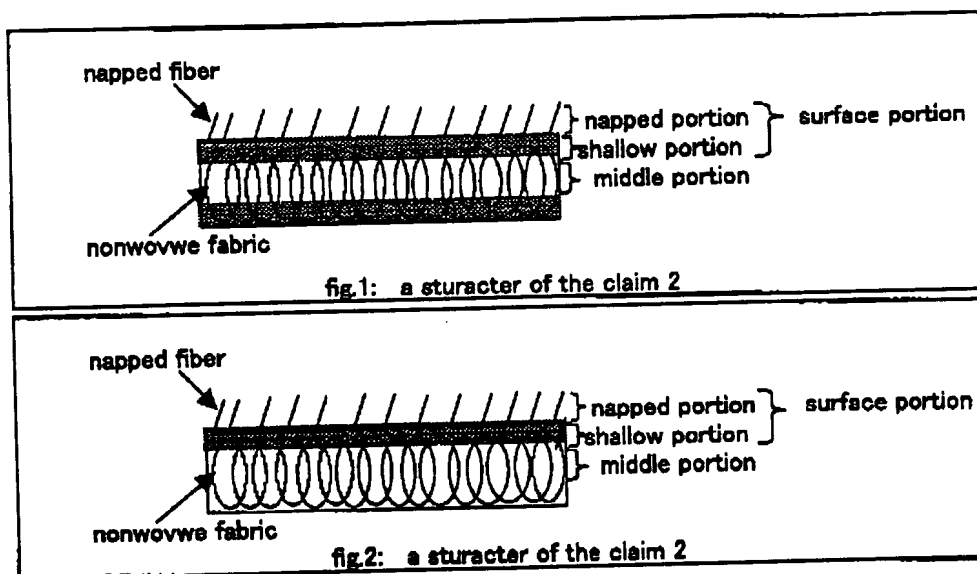


### REMARKS

The rejection of Claims 1-20 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, is respectfully traversed. Indeed, the rejection would now appear to be moot in view of the above-discussed amendment.

In addition, with respect to the rejection in paragraph 3 of the Office Action, it is understood that Applicants contemplate the term --artificial leather-- to include both artificial leather and synthetic leather, since artificial leather is made from a specific nonwoven fabric that is comprised of a three-dimensional entangled nonwoven fabric and an elastomer, and synthetic leather is made from a fabric (e.g., a woven, a knit fabric) without the specific nonwoven fabric discussed above. As contemplated by Applicants, a structure of artificial leather is described in the specification at page 3, lines 16-18, and recited in Claim 10; a structure of synthetic leather is described in the specification at page 7, lines 28-32.

With respect to the rejection in paragraph 5 of the Office Action, shown below are exemplary figures for the structure recited in Claim 2, wherein fig. 1 shows a napped portion on both sides of the sheet material, and fig. 2 shows the napped portion on only one side of the sheet material.



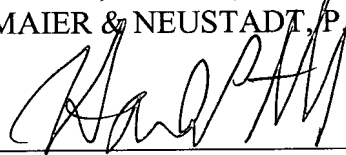
Note that even before the above amendment to Claim 2, there was no recital, in effect, that the middle portion of the sheet constitutes a surface portion., contrary to the Examiner's finding.

For all the above reasons, it is respectfully requested that this rejection be withdrawn.

Applicants gratefully acknowledge the Examiner's indication of allowability of Claims 1-20. Accordingly, it is respectfully requested that the Examiner pass this application to issue.

Respectfully submitted,

OBLON, SPIVAK, McCLELLAND,  
MAIER & NEUSTADT, P.C.



---

Norman F. Oblon  
Attorney of Record  
Registration No. 24,618

Harris A. Pitlick  
Registration No. 38,779



22850

Tel: (703) 413-3000  
Fax: (703) 413 -2220  
NFO/HAP/cja

I:\ATTY\HAP\215909US-AM.DOC